

Message Text

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ORIGIN PA-02

INFO OCT-01 CCO-00 SS-15 SSO-00 ISO-00 PRS-01 NSC-05

NSCE-00 NEA-09 /033 R

DRAFTED BY PA/M:PDENNIS:LM

APPROVED BY PA/M:FWISNER

S/S: WHLUERS

DESIRED DISTRIBUTION

PA, S/S, S/PRS, NSCE

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 060557

TOSEC 692

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

PLEASE PASS TO RODMAN/ADAMS/BORG FOR SECRETARY KISSINGER

1. HERewith FULL TEXT JOSEPH KRAFT COLUMN , MARCH 18, WASHPOST, ENTITLED "PLUNGING IN THE PERSIAN GULF."
2. EVEN AS IT WITHDRAWS SO PAINFULLY FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA, THE UNITED STATES IS PLUNGING IN THE PERSIAN GULF. MASSIVE AMERICAN PROGRAMS FOR ARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT ARE DAILY GAINING MORE SCOPE IN IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA. BUT ALREADY THERE IS REASON TO BELIEVE THE SHAH OF IRAN AND THE KING OF SAUDI ARABIA HAVE STRUCK A DEAL WHICH HURTS RATHER THAN HELPS AMERICAN INTERESTS.

3. THE CURRENT AMERICAN POLICY TOWARD IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA FINDS EXPRESSION IN BILATERAL COMMISSIONS SET UP TO HANDLE WASHINGTON'S ACCOUNTS WITH TEHRAN AND RIYADH.

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THROUGH THE AGENCY OF THESE COMMISSIONS BILLIONS OF DOLLARS

OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE BUSINESS IS BEING DONE.

4. THE UNITED STATES HAS UNDERTAKEN TO EQUIP AND TRAIN THE ARMED FORCES OF IRAN IN A PROGRAM WHICH INCLUDES SALE OF THE MOST SOPHISTICATED JET AIRCRAFT. IRAN'S PORT AND HIGHWAY SYSTEM IS BEING EXPANDED AND REBUILT. NUCLEAR

REACTORS ARE BEING SOLD TO IRAN--PROBABLY WITH INADEQUATE SAFEGUARDS AGAINST CONVERSION TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

5. AS FOR THE SAUDIS, THE MIXED COMMISSION HAS ARRANGED FOR A MULTI-BILLION-DOLLAR MILITARY MODERNIZATION PROGRAM WHICH ALSO INCLUDES SOPHISTICATED AIRCRAFT. BIG INVESTMENTS IN INDUSTRIALIZATION, PARTICULARLY IN PETRO-CHEMICALS AND AGRICULTURE, ARE ALSO UNDER WAY.

6. THESE DEALS OF COURSE, ARE NOT FOREIGN AID. THE IRANIANS AND SAUDIS ARE PAYING IN THE HARD CASH EARNED THROUGH OIL SALES. BUT AMERICAN OFFICIALS--NOTABLY SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER--EXPECT THAT THE COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC WILL YIELD DIPLOMATIC BENEFITS.

7. PUBLICLY DR. KISSINGER TALKS OF "THICKENING THE WEB OF INTERDEPENDENCE." PRIVATELY HE SPEAKS OF "GETTING MY HOOKS INTO THEM." IN PLAINER ENGLISH HE MEANS THAT WHEN IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA BECOME HOOKED ON AMERICAN TECHNOLOGY HE WILL BE ABLE TO GIVE THEM REASONS FOR COOPERATING WITH THIS COUNTRY ON POLITICAL MATTERS.

8. BUT EXPERIENCE IS ALREADY FALSIFYING THAT EXPECTATION. MISSIONS FROM SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN VISITED WASHINGTON IN THE LAST DAYS OF FEBRUARY AND THE FIRST DAYS OF THIS MONTH WASHINGTON WAS DETERMINED TO MAKE A GO OF THE VISITS. SO THE TOUCHY SUBJECT OF THE BOYCOTT OF FIRMS DEEMED PRO-ZIONIST WAS NOT RAISED WITH THE SAUDIS. NEITHER WAS THERE ANY INQUIRY WITH THE IRANIANS INTO THE MATTER OF SAFEGUARDS AGAINST NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

9. SO WHAT HAPPENED? WELL, ON MARCH 6, AT THE MEETING UNCLASSIFIED

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OF OIL EXPORTING COUNTRIES IN ALGIERS, THERE WAS ANNOUNCED WHAT AMOUNTS TO A SAUDI-IRANIAN DEAL AGAINST TWO VITAL AMERICAN INTERESTS.

10. AS PART OF THE DEAL THE SAUDIS ARE UNDERTAKING TO CUT PRODUCTION OF OIL. DESPITE REPEATED PROMISES TO THE CONTRARY, THEY REDUCED PRODUCTION BY 25 PER CENT LAST MONTH.

11. IN RETURN FOR PROTECTION ON THE PRICE OF OIL WHICH THEY NEED FOR CURRENT DEVELOPMENT PLANS, THE IRANIANS HAVE AGREED TO SETTLE BORDER DISPUTES WITH IRAQ. A PART OF THAT DEAL INVOLVES THE END OF IRANIAN SUPPORT FOR THE KURDISH INSURRECTION IN IRAQ, THUS REDUCING ONE OF THE FEW ETHNIC ENCLAVES IN THE ARAB WORLD, AND EVENTUALLY FREEING THE IRAQI ARMY TO REINFORCE SYRIA ON

ISRAEL'S EASTERN FRONT.

12. THE UPSHOT IS A HARD BLOW FOR THE UNITED STATES. THE REINFORCEMENT OF THE SYRIAN FRONT RAISES A NEW OBSTACLE TO DR. KISSINGER'S PRESENT EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE FURTHER PROGRESS IN DISENGAGEMENT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND EGYPT. THE SAUDI CUT IN OIL PRODUCTION MAKES IT HARDER--AND MAYBE EVEN IMPOSSIBLE--FOR THE UNITED STATES TO BREAK THE CARTEL OF PRODUCING COUNTRIES WHICH KEEPS THE PRICES SO HIGH. JUST TO RAM THE POINT HOME, THE IRANIANS AND SAUDIS LAST WEEK BOTH LOOSENEED THE TIES OF THEIR CURRENCIES WITH THE DOLLAR.

13. THE IMMEDIATE LESSON IS THAT THE SHAH AND KING FAISAL ARE WILY CUSTOMERS LOOKING AFTER THEIR OWN INTERESTS IN WAYS NOT ENTIRELY AT ONE WITH AMERICAN IDEAS. IT MAKES NO SENSE IN THESE CONDITIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES TO DEPEND ON PERSIAN GULF OIL IMPORTS. INSOFAR AS THIS COUNTRY IS GOING TO IMPORT OIL AT ALL, IT SHOULD RELY ON FRIENDLY STATES CLOSER TO OUR BORDERS AND THE SEA LANES WE CONTROL. THAT MEANS, AS A PAPER PREPARED IN THE FEDERAL ENERGY ADMINISTRATION AND THE PENTAGON ARGUES, A POLICY WHICH WOULD CONCENTRATE ON CANADA, MEXICO, VENEZUELA, INDONESIA AND NIGERIA FOR UNCLASSIFIED

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OIL IMPORTS.

14. THE LARGER LESSON IS THAT THE UNITED STATES IS NOT GOOD AT USING "THE WEB OF INTERDEPENDENCE" FOR POLITICAL GOALS. THE AMERICAN SYSTEM IS SO PLURALISTIC, THE DISPOSITION TO HELP SO GENERALIZED, THE FEAR OF LOSING AN ALLY SO OVERBLOWN, THAT WASHINGTON IS REGULARLY PUSHED AROUND BY ITS DEPENDENTS. SO THOUGHTFUL AMERICANS, FAR FROM BEING STAMPEDED BY CHARGES OF "NEO-ISOLATIONISM," WILL STILL WANT TO BE HIGHLY DISCRIMINATING ABOUT MILITARY, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENTS ABROAD. (END TEXT.) INGERSOLL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE060557
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: PDENNIS:LM
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750094-0531
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750339/aaaabjbr.tel
Line Count: 166
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN PA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: hartledg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 JUN 2003 by SilvaL0>; APPROVED <19 FEB 2004 by hartledg>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS MATERIAL PLEASE PASS TO RODMAN/ADAMS/BORG FOR SECRETARY KISSINGER
TAGS: OVIP, (KISSINGER, HENRY A)
To: JERUSALEM
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006